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Days Remembered....

By
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BY

CHARLES WARMAN

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DAYS REMEMBERED

(An Indian Legend of Wild Cat Rock, near Liverpool, N. S.)



Talk not in Greek unless you understand it.
Preach not of love, unless you can command it.
Too many lives waste ages in advising,
When all their ~~hands~~^{days} they ought to be devising !

Men come before us, strong, and full of reason,
And tell us of it in and out of season ;
Yet all their moments never use it truly,—
Debase their gifts in things that are unruly.

The world is full of temples without power ;
Of resolutions living scarce an hour :
Of bright hopes dying, and those long since dead ;
Of saddened features from which hope hath fled.

In ev'ry storm that rageth, life departeth.
The air is purer after light'ning darteth.
Things that we see, and those things not appearing,
All rest upon one fact, and one sure hearing.

I stood upon a mighty rock of ages,
Formed ere the birth of earth's earliest sages,
Called "Wild Cat" by the peasants who surround it,
Tho' why, none ever could propound it.

It stretches east and west, of furlongs many.
Upon its western side, a shade for any
Who might need shelter when the days were torrid,
Or when the maple leaves were turning florid.

An Indian told me that in days long ended,
A mighty river round the place had bended ;
Had covered all that now were marshy places ;
Had met the ocean in its wild embraces.

His fathers lived around, and fished, and hunted,
(Where now in truth a few spruce trees stood stunted ;)
Had lived good lives of usefulness, and pleasure,
And thought their land would always prove their treasure.

That once this rock had lived within the ocean,—
A mighty fish, that gave the water motion ;
And warred with ev'ry form of life about it.
(He looked at me, and asked, "why did I doubt it ?")

Said he : I tell you that in days forgotten,
When our young maids were not arrayed in cotton,
This rock did not exist, as you behold it,
Was not a rock at all I oft have told it.

Our tribes had suffered deep, and heavy losses,
And murmured daily at these constant crosses ;
The Spirit paid no heed unto their pleading,
And heads of tribes gave up all interceding.

A mighty fish would come within the river,
And ere one hand could stretch out to deliver
Thereof our own from the destruction near them,
Would cause a fearful wave to outward bear them.

Borne in canoes upon the rushing waters,
Out, out, far out, were taken sons and daughters ;
Who filled with terror from the monster roaring,
Saw over them an angry tempest pouring.

And none returned to comfort those remaining ;
And fears, and deep distrusts were ever gaining
A power over those who asked protection,
And ne'er received a hope in their dejection.

Homes were destroyed by the dark monster's doing.
The youth and maid gave up the ways of wooing.
High waves at any time might sweep the pathway
And scatter others with those now astray.

The race looked forward to complete extinction.
None of them had the courage, or distinction
To bid the curser of the land a ceasing
From cruel movements that were not decreasing.

A gathering of the families yet existing
Was once more called, to question if resisting
Would in the final give them peace and power,
Or sweep them from the country in an hour.

“Resist!” the elders said. Once more petition
That the Great Spirit, seeing our contrition,
Will send a swift deliver, with true ruling
And perfect us more with a better schooling.

To teach us how the foe may be confounded.
That we may be with peace on all sides bounded.
To keep us closer unto truth and blessing.
To give us courage when our sins confessing.

A mighty shout went upward unto heaven,
And all the woods re-echoed until even ;
Then darkness came, and fears came onward flying,
And hope again went swiftly to the dying.

All through the night the watchers waited slowly ;
And deeper came the darkness on them wholly ;
Until ere morn the sentinels are slumbering,
And their dread foe again the host is numbering.

One outward rush of water will outsweep them.
One mighty wave will sure forever keep them.
No more shall their dark forms in peace be drifted,
Or their strange praises unto God be lifted.

Yet ere the final rush of devastation
Hath been attempted, as its first invasion,
A dazzling light far in the east appeareth,
And speaketh wisdom unto such that heareth.

Calm is the ocean, just its bosom heaveth.
Their enemy his haunt a moment leaveth,
And rusheth out to meet the form he seeth
Then back again unto its post it fleeth.

The sentinels awaken, and they tremble.
Then all the souls again in haste assemble,
Filled part with fear, and part with hope of power
To overcome at last, tho' late the hour.

The eastern clouds are tinged with purple glowing,
With here and there a speck of blue sky showing.
And from the light that came when all were sleeping,
Appeared a God to hold them in his keeping.

Their hearts are filled with terror. And while turning
To flee afar from all this bitter burning,
A voice spoke calm, and clear, and full, unto them,
"The sufferings of you all, oh, tribes ! I knew them.

I saw your sorrow, and I heard your crying ;
And long delayed myself, that all this trying
Should make you daily stronger in your labor,
And know more sympathy for ev'ry neighbor.

Behold thine enemy, swollen with passion,
I shall destroy him by no common fashion.
He shall remove from out his place and keeping,
And be a mark of an eternal sleepng."

Then o'er the earth came darkness, and the thunder
Rolled low and long. The forests fell asunder.
Forked light'ning threw its talons o'er the trouble ;
And the vast deep became a hissing bubble.

The form of light came nearer to those beings,
Whose chiefest thoughts were of immediate fleeings.
It bade them wait the end, which could not harm them,
Tho' all the elements didst now alarm them.

He bid the great disturber of their pleasure
To cease from henceforth, and to no more measure
Its mighty pride with things beyond its knowing.
That heaven and earth had learned to curse its showing.

The field of water trembled at its foaming.
And all the energies of its past roaming
Were gathered for a final rush of splendor
Upon these tribes, and then on the defender.

The waters parted at its onward speeding ;
And all around was ev'ry shore receding.
Victorious once again it looked, and thought it,
When lo, the river vanished, earth had caught it !

This mighty fish, a whale,* the Indian called it,
Found from its home a terror that appalled it.
The sun shone out upon its form alone,
And their deliverer turned it into stone.

O'er ocean's bed the waters once more roll.
The ones once ta'en were brought back safe and whole.
All gather round this saviour, and declare
That they are willing of his life to share.

The sweetest maiden unto him is taken,
And tells that for him she hath all forsaken.
She prays him rest himself, and be their leader,
The tribe's own God, its one eternal pleader.

Around his neck her dark-dyed arms are meeting ;
And from her eyes love seeketh love's repeating.
Soft kisses fall upon the weary features
Of him who bore deep sorrow for all creatures.

Child, he exclaims, I cannot have thy pleasure.
To other men you shall be holy treasure.
Thou knowest not of love as I behold it,
And if thou didst, thou never wouldest enfold it.

Love unto me is to be constant dying ;
To rescue men, yet from them ever flying ;
To hear their praises, and not of it to listen,
To see no grandeur where your brightest glisten.

Return unto thy people, and obey them.
The noble deeds of all, truly portray them.
Love always ruled, far in the days forgotten,
E'en days themselves were never here begotten.

*NOTE.—About a mile towards Milton from the Bristol side of Liverpool the rock has a little likeness to a heavy-headed specie of whale such as is not found in these waters.

The even came, and he their friend was moving
Far off from them, and other mortals proving.
A peace he left, that each tried with explaining
To prove why it was constantly remaining.

The shadow of the rock in weary places
Bid them again lift up their saddened faces,
To gaze with awe upon their foe before them
Whose reign of horror now no more was o'er them.

Hope smiled again, and homes again were gladdened,
With those in joy, whom once much grief had maddened ;
Their one Great Spirit loved them with a kindness
That drove away deep doubt, and all its blindness.

FINAL.

I stood and viewed the land about, around me,
The trees, the river ; and the evening found me
Looking upon the ocean, eastward laying
With all its fishing crafts, weary of straying.

Some came within the harbor for a resting ;
Others continued the long billows breasting.
Then night came down where once salvation entered,
And all my thoughts upon that tale were centred.

And there before me lay a village sleeping,—
The town of Liverpool, in sacred keeping :
Unconscious of events that made the rock-mound,
And all its coast-line varying, and rock-bound.

Out on the sea, lights from the ship were glowing ;
And far beyond, the stars of the unknowing
Shone deep, and clear, and tender, to my seeing,
And taught me more of the Creator Being.

I find the beautiful is ever near us ;
To give us peace, to comfort, and to cheer us.
Where'er we stand is full of earnest story,
Of trial, failure, and of final glory.

DAYS REMEMBERED

(An Incident in the Late War with Spain)



I remember when the soldier parted from that one in sorrow,
Who had yielded up her life into his own ;
And hot tears from each were falling, bitter tears of bitter weeping,
Mingling with the broken spirit's heart-life moan.

He raised her tear-bathed forehead 'till it rested on his bosom,
And imprinted on the trembling lips a kiss.
While the village kine looked shy'ly, full of wonder and amazement,
At the strange and earnest doings such as this !

See ! the tender lips have met his with no words of a reproof,
Ah ! a lover's parting, friends, is sacred time :
For this life is so uncertain, and true separations deadening,
And too many unjust cravings in our clime !

And a friendship here once broken with a true and honest lover
In this fleeting time may never be renewed.
Then we mourn in secret places o'er the shameful sudden parting,
E'en when fully with the worldly scenes imbued.

Other tears have left the fountain, and a sigh escapes the prison,
As he draweth her yet closer to his breast ;
And the faltering lips they whispered, "Oh ! my darling, precious
darling,
Let us humbly trust in God who knoweth best."

I must obey the order, for my noble country needs me,
And I am sure you would not wish me stay.
Yet my love is not cold growing, nor my only hope despairing,
And never shall while other paths I stray.

If had I my will my dearest I would never leave your presence,
It sheds a holy comfort over me,
And when on the march with comrades, or where e'er the soldiers' duty.
My inward thoughts shall be of God and thee.

Of the God who thus far led me through the evil days with triumph ;
Who hath kept this life 'mid dangers, amid ill.
Unto Him command my spirit, I have found Him ever faithful,
And I am sure he doeth justly still.

Then of thee. For we have promised to share life's toil together,
To bear each other's burdens nobly on.
Unto Him who gave thee to me shall I trust in this dark future,
And He will not forget the soldier gone.

If I fall when fierce the battle storm is raging loud around me,
Ere other earth shall cover up this frame ;
I will come to thee in spirit, and will gently break the sorrow
That may gather o'er your lover and his name.

Then another kiss and parted. He dare not look behind him,
For a bitter sadness filled his humble soul,
And his heart cried out in anguish to the God of love and pity,
To the God who doth the paths of worlds control.

When the darkness slowly covered up the hills, the vale, the forest,
A sorrow-stricken soul awoke again ;
And it hastened to the mansion with the earthly form in trembling,
With the head bowed low in deathly weak'ning pain.

* * * *

O'er the ocean wave a steamer bore her lover from his country
To where fevered winds in fierceness sometimes blow ;
And he paced the deck with sadness deeply seated 'neath his forehead,
And a longing of the future days to know.

Far in the distant looming as a sudden gath'ring tempest,
The land of deep-blood battles now appeared ;
And his thoughts flew back to Mary, whom he left in sadness weeping,
And 'twas only for this loved-one that he feared.

Yet each day would be one nearer to the time of the home marching
 And each day one less obeying of command ;
 After battles well contested had each added to his glory,
 And the honor to this mighty freedom land.

Quick he shuddered as so sudden came there swiftly to remembrance
 Of a vision which last night in beauty fell.
 Of a place of untold glory, amid lights of tender shining,
 Where the wearied souls of saddened ones might dwell.

Music filled the sacred country, far beyond his expectation,
 Sweetest music as his ear had never heard,
 And how soon he grew accustomed to the grand angelic anthems !
 Yes ! he thought he could repeat them word for word !

While he listened to the praises that were filling him with rapture,
 And the harpers with their notes in holy chord ;
 He beheld a form of glory clothed in spotless robes of pureness,
 And the name he bore was "Jesus, the Christ, the Lord."

And to him he said, "come over, we are waiting brother for you,
 All thy life-work among men on earth is o'er ;
 Thou art not too young to meet us, old age dangers would destroy
 thee,
 Old age trials too would sweep thee past the shore."

"Soon the soul you love will enter, here to rest in peace eternal,
 And with you I too shall the first welcome give.
 Then the bitter pangs from parting will have disappeared in greeting,
 And all past hopeless hopes shall bloom to live."

This the dream the soldier pondered, and he knew its true fore-telling,—
 That he on the field of battle soon should die.
 He would bravely meet the ending with a calm and perfect trusting
 In the ruler of the earth, and sea, and sky.

* * * *

Fiercely raged the battle round him, now the foe is swiftly flying,
 And he heard his soldiers shouts of victory ;
 Yet he did not heed the cheering of great joy o'er foemen driven ;—
 He was dying, slowly dying, peacefully.

Comrades raised the mangled forehead on the bloody field of battle,
Comrades sought to give him comfort, give him rest ;
Yet he knew not of their kindness, for his mind had homeward
wandered,
As a free-let bird straight wingeth to its nest.

And the form he loved was near him in the evening of his dying,
Yes ! he saw her ere the spirit sought its home ;
And he fell asleep at midnight with a smile of peace upon him,
With bright starlight filling all the mighty dome.

His faithful one that midnight rose to walk her humble chamber,
For all sleep refused her pleading to return,
And she deemed that spirits hovered near, around, and all about her ;
Then the lamp was quickly set to dimly burn.

Swifter than the swallows' fitting, or the lightnings' flash on mortals,
Unnamed brightness filled the quiet sleeping room,
And she sprang unto the window as a thought of fire crossed her,
Peering far into the chilling, silent gloom.

Yet the light was not earth's brightness, nor its peacefulness earth's
keeping ;
These were sacred scenes of an eternal view.
Vivid, strange sensations crossed her, still she felt no fear or terror,
In these moments of revealing, strangely new.

As she turned unto the mantle where the carved clock was pealing,
Slowly ringing out the startling midnight hour :
Clear before her rose her lover, calm and pale, and gently smiling,
With all the old-time will and former power.

Sacred peace lay o'er his features, peace as passeth our weak
knowledge :
Peace, that mortals of this earth have never known.
Lovingly he looked upon her, beckoning at once to follow,
And then he went into the silent night alone.

Morning light had long arisen o'er the mansion and surroundings
And the parents humbly waited for their child.
Why was absent Mary's presence ? Such a thing had never happened.
How they missed the morning greeting ever mild !

Still they listened for her footseps. Then a servant quick was summoned :

"Go and knock at Mary's door and call her down!"
Yet no voice the knocking heeded, and the servant slowly told them,
"All is still and strangely quiet with your own."

Rising quickly from their armchairs, followed closely by the servant,
Father, mother slowly stagger up the stair ;
And they enter in the chamber of the one they love so dearly,
Who was known among the masses as "The Fair."

There upon the carpet laying, was their daughter pale and deathly,
And from her lips there dropped deep whitish foam ;
While the hands grasped wildly, tightly, at some unseen form around
her,
And the death-glazed eyes with vacant stare would roam.

Then they quickly raised the fainting, and they bathed the fevered
temples,
Oh ! with their hands they eagerly worked on ;
Until the toil rewarded well by a sign of life returning,
And at length the total consciousness is won.

Ere the noon-tide meal was ready, Mary told of the deep vision,
Of the glory, of the beauty of the scene,
Of the light, its dazzling brightness, of her calmness in that moment,
Of her lover, of the grandeur of his mien.

Then she told her trembling parents that when he was parting from
her,
(Heeding as a soldier true the country's call ;)
That he said his spirit gently would disclose to her the sadness,
If he for the nation's sake should fall.

"I am sure that he has fallen on the blood-stained Cuban island,
I am sure that he will never come again,
And I know that shortly I shall go to meet him in that resting,
Free from sorrow, free from parting, free from pain."

Dreary rose the mansion's bearing in the dawn of the next morning,
Ghostly shadows slowly strolled along the vale,
Through a path-road sped a horseman straight unto the death-
wrapped dwelling,
Wearied with the race o'er rocky hill and dale.

Up the gravelled path he speedeth, heeding not the watch-dog's
baying;

Never noticing the silence o'er the place :
Than with sudden bound he leapeth from the saddle to the doorway,
Quickly sweeping off the dawn-dew from his face.

Then he holds the polished knocker, raised it thrice. As many echoes
Are resounding through the sad-toned rooms and hall,
And a servant hast'ned to him to receive a message, —
That which yesterday was made known to them all.

Then the servant tells the horseman of the strange, the real appearing
Unto Mary, of her lover, in the gloom,
Of the finding her unconscious, of her story when restored,
And of her now slowly dying in the room.

The morning's dullness faded, and there rose a noonday's splendor,
That brightened up the sorrowing ones, the ill.
It thronged in holy glory through the chamber of the dying,
And shed deep lustre o'er the western hill.

Dear friends sought to stay the spirit that was winging fast its
presence
To that resting where another spirit lay.
Earthly ties are rent, are riven. Human help of none availing,
Soul-deep friends in bitter anguish weep to-day.

Yes, in vain ! a ray of brightness, far beyond all other shining
Shed a sweet peace on ev'ry weeping form ;
Then calling to her lover, whom she saw in glory waiting,
She turned away from home, and trying storm.

She entered in. The evening clouds were grandly clothed in purple ;
The setting sun sank in a golden wave.
No fierce wild wind swept over those remaining here as mourners,
No myriad foes arose to chill the brave.

The night came on. The heart-sick souls were in deep silence bending,
O'er the still form of her they loved so well,
And prayers went up unto the throne of grace for deeper comfort,
And on sad-hearted ones a deeper comfort fell.

